

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

/DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USMISSION ECON BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 6985

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: LABOR DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) LISBON 6769 (DTG 011727Z OCT 76), (B) LISBON 6912
(DTG 081746Z OCT 76)

SUMMARY: LABOR IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING THE COCKPIT FOR
POLITICAL CONFRONTATION. INTERSINDICAL ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT
FOR "UNCONSTITUTIONAL" LABOR DECREES WHICH IT CLAIMED ENDANGER
WORKERS' GAINS UNDER THE REVOLUTION AND PROMOTE A PLURALISTIC
LABOR MOVEMENT. THE PSD (FORMERLY THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC
PARTY) HELD ITS FIRST LABOR LEADERS MEETING, TANGIBLE
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EVIDENCE OF THE PARTY'S INTENTION TO STRENGTHEN ITS LABOR

SECTOR. A SERIES OF IMPORTANT UNION ELECTIONS ARE ON THE HORIZON. END SUMMARY.

1. INTERSINDICAL HOLDS PLENARY SESSION: THE PCP-CONTROLLED CONFEDERATION, INTERSINDICAL, MET IN LISBON OCTOBER 9. ORGANIZERS CLAIMED 167 DELEGATIONS FROM 104 AFFILIATED UNIONS AND 24 NON-AFFILIATED UNIONS WERE PRESENT REPRESENTING SOME 1,200,000 WORKERS. THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE 12 RESOLUTIONS PASSED:

- BERATED THE GOVERNMENT FOR FORMULATING LABOR LEGISLATION "WITHOUT PARTICIPATION OF THE WORKERS, AS REQUIRED BY THE CONSTITUTION";
- DEMANDED THAT THE LABOR DECREE LAWS APPROVED BY THE CABINET (REF A) BE SENT TO CONGRESS FOR CONSIDERATION;
- REPUDIATED THE GOVERNMENT'S MODIFICATION OF THE LABOR LAW TO ALLOW FOR "LABOR PLURALISM" AND THE FORMATION OF OTHER CONFEDERATIONS.
- PROTESTED THE FIRING OF 23 EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVERNMENT-RUN TELEVISION (RTP) BY TOMAS ROSA.

2. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WORKERS MEET: THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PSD), UNTIL RECENTLY KNOWN AS THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD), HELD ITS FIRST LABOR CONFERENCE IN LISBON OCT 9-10 WITH 120 DELEGATES PRESENT. THE MEETING DEFINED "REFORMIST UNIONISM" AND PASSED A NUMBER OF RESOLUTIONS:

- CALLED FOR LABOR UNITY AND DENOUNCED INTERSINDICAL FOR DIVIDING THE LABOR MOVEMENT BY ITS PARTISAN AND OPPORTUNIST POLICIES.
- CALLED FOR A LABOR CONGRESS WITH DELEGATES FROM EACH UNION CHOSEN PROPORTIONATELY IN ACCORD WITH THE POLITICAL TENDENCIES OF THE UNION MEMBERSHIP, I.E., PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.
- SUPPORTED THE OPEN LETTER (CARTA ABERTA) GROUP OF UNIONS AND DEFENDED THE CREATION OF A SINGLE DEMOCRATIC, INDEPENDENT LABOR CONFEDERATION.

3. A CRITICAL LABOR ELECTION: THE MOST IMPORTANT OF FORTHCOMING SERIES OF UNION ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES FEDERATION, A NEWLY UNIONIZED SECTOR WHICH WILL

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INCORPORATE 300,000 GOVERNMENT WORKERS. ORIGINALLY EXPECTED IN OCTOBER, THE ELECTIONS ARE NOW POSTPONED UNTIL DECEMBER 18. SEPARATE ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD IN EACH OF THREE REGIONS, NORTH, CENTRAL, AND SOUTH. IN THE NORTHERN AND CENTRAL REGIONS THE PSD AND THE SOCIALISTS HAVE FORMED TACIT ALLIANCES AND EXPECT TO WIN. UNTIL RECENTLY THE PS HAD REJECTED SUCH AN ALLIANCE IN THE SOUTHERN (LISBON) REGION, WHERE THE PSD HAS LESS STRENGTH. RECENT INDICATIONS ARE,

HOWEVER, THAT SOME ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS MAY BE ARRANGED.

4. OTHER ELECTIONS: HOTLY CONTESTED ELECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR THE HOTEL WORKERS OCTOBER 22 AND THE LISBON INSURANCE WORKERS OCT 28. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LISBON CLERICAL WORKERS UNION, ONE OF THE MAINSTAYS OF THE CARTA ABERTA GROUP, FACES A CRITICAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OCT 14 WHEN A PCP FACTION WILL ATTEMPT TO FORCE THE UNION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FORTHCOMING INTERSINDICAL-SPONSORED NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS. THE TEACHERS, BAKERS, AND METAL WORKERS FEDERATIONS ALL HAVE LABOR DISPUTES IN VARIOUS STAGES OF NEGOTIATION AND ARE INVOLVED IN DEMONSTRATIONS OR STRIKE THREATS.

5. COMMENT: THE INTERSINDICAL PLENARY SESSION WAS PART OF THE CONFEDERATION'S EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN ITS HEGEMONY OVER THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND BRING INCREASED PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT. IT ALSO SERVED TO KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM FOR INTERSINDICAL'S NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS. INTERSINDICAL HAS BEEN SET BACK BY THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION REMOVING ITS STATUS AS THE SOLE PERMITTED LABOR CONFEDERATION, BUT IT STILL CONTROLS THE BULK OF THE UNIONS, AND IS DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN ITS POSITION.

6. THE SOCIALISTS ARE WELL AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES' ELECTION, AND ARE WORKING TO ENSURE A FAVORABLE VOTE. SPLITS IN OTHER UNIONS BETWEEN SOCIALIST AND PSD SLATES IN THE PAST HAVE SOMETIMES ALLOWED PCP VICTORIES. THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCH A DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHERN REGION ELECTION ACCOUNTS FOR THE SOCIALISTS' BELATED WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE IN THE SOUTH, EVEN IN THE FACE OF RESENTMENT OF SOME "GO IT ALONE" SOCIALIST LABOR LEADERS.

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7. THE MEETING OF THE PSD LABOR LEADERS IS WELCOME EVIDENCE THAT THIS PARTY, THE SECOND LARGEST IN PORTUGAL, IS FOLLOWING THROUGH ON ITS ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO GIVE GREATER PRIORITY TO THE LABOR SECTOR. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND THE PSD IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES ELECTIONS IS ANOTHER HOPEFUL SIGN THAT COOPERATION IN LABOR MATTERS IS POSSIBLE BETWEEN THESE TWO DEMOCRATIC PARTIES.
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